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MARCH.

1897.

ANNALS
OF THE
AMERICAN ACADEMY
OF
POLITICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCE.

IN MEMORIAM.

FRANCIS AMASA WALKER.

Francis A. Walker died suddenly at his home in Boston, January 5, 1897. He had won distinction in many fields. As a soldier, as a public servant, as a teacher or as an author, he was known to thousands to whom the news of his death was at the same time a shock and a grief. To his friends it brought a keen sense of personal bereavement. His sudden death in the midst of his activity, makes them feel more acutely the loss they have suffered, though as yet unable to realize fully its extent. A critical consideration of Dr. Walker's place as an economist, of his services to statistical and economic thought may be reserved for a later day. Upon the morrow of his death, we would simply pay a grateful tribute to the genius which achieved such general recognition in so many fields of intellectual activity, and to the man whose dignified, yet frank and cordial personality, endeared him to his associates.

Francis A. Walker had just reached his majority when the war broke out. He immediately left his law books to take part in the great struggle. In the field he showed at once the qualities of an admirable soldier. Promotion followed rapidly and when the war closed it found him with the brevet rank of a brigadier-general.

He was a noble specimen of the citizen soldiers who shed so much lustre upon that eventful struggle. He performed his duty manfully, he earned an enviable place in the esteem and affection of his fellow officers, he returned from the field, and devoted himself with equal ardor and with equal distinction to the arts of peace. Apart from a certain decision of manner, a habit of dropping a subject completely when a decision had been reached, those who knew him in after life might have looked almost in vain for any traces of his former military career. Indeed, had it not been for the title which persistently clung to him, as it seemed, against his wish, many would never have surmised that the man of science or the man of affairs had won renown upon the field of battle. In an intercourse, extending over several years, the writer has frequently noted with some surprise, how little that splendid service in the army entered into his daily life and conversation. At rare intervals there was a brief reminiscence of those events—a few words of cordial and kindly appreciation of his fellow officers, and especially of his revered chief, General Hancock, upon whose staff Walker served as adjutant-general. But this was all. It was only with extreme reluctance that he could be drawn to speak of his own experiences. We of a generation to whom the war is history, and not even a memory, must perforce know of these things only by hearsay. But the testimony of those who knew General Walker in the field is singularly in accord with our personal reminiscences. They too speak of his habitual modesty, but they add glowing testimonies of his military genius. Bravery united with a keen intelligence to make him an excellent soldier. His fellow officers

relate many instances of his bravery and courage. Of his intelligence and understanding of military affairs, his unsurpassed military history, "The History of the Second Army Corps" brings evidence which all can comprehend.

At the close of the war he taught school for a time, and was a writer on the *Springfield Republican* but was soon called into the government service. Here he occupied the posts of Chief of the Bureau of Statistics of the Treasury Department, Superintendent of the Ninth (1870) Census, and for a brief period Commissioner of Indian Affairs. Ten years later he was Superintendent of the Tenth (1880) Census. His name will ever be associated with the extension and improvement of the statistical service of the United States Government. From small beginnings the United States Census had grown to be a vast undertaking. It had outgrown in 1870 the antiquated machinery which operating through the United States Marshals, officials engrossed by other duties, had been provided for it. It was General Walker's desire not only to improve the quality of the census, but to make it a complete record of the social and economic condition of the people. To this end he strove earnestly, but Congress refused its aid. He was therefore constrained to take the census of 1870 under an act which he knew to be highly defective, yet his talent as a statistician could not be suppressed. The four volumes of the Ninth Census are a distinct advance over their predecessors. In orderly arrangement and effective analysis they reveal a mind skilled in the use of statistical data.

The Tenth Census was peculiarly Walker's creation. For though he resigned his office in 1881, and left the completion of the work to others, it was he who laid the plans of the enumeration, and conducted it through its early stages. Congress had listened to his plans and passed an act which extended the scope of the census and reorganized its machinery. Thus equipped he made the census the most exhaustive statistical inquiry which had ever been under-

taken by any government. Its twenty-four volumes are a vast mine of information from which may be drawn precious materials for the study of our social and economic conditions.

From 1873 to 1889, Dr. Walker was professor of political economy at the Sheffield Scientific School of Yale University, and it is to this period that we owe some of his most important works. When in 1881 he returned to academic life it was no longer as a teacher, but as president of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He found it poorly equipped and struggling for existence. His administration leaves it in the foremost rank of technical schools. If at this time he left the class-room it was only to find a larger audience in the public. His contributions to economic science did not cease, but he worked chiefly through the printing press and the various societies devoted to economic research. For many years he was president of the American Economic Association, and he did more than any one else to direct its labors in fruitful fields. Till the day of his death he was president of the American Statistical Association, whose labors have been more modest, but not less helpful, to the smaller body of students who have devoted themselves especially to this field of research. Indeed, on the last day of the old year, he made the opening address at the session of the Washington branch of that organization, an address marked by lucid statement and vigorous thought.

It would be tedious to recite the names of learned societies at home and abroad which have delighted to do him honor, or to name the universities which have heaped honorary degrees upon him. It would furnish but another evidence of the universal recognition of his worth and services.

His services to economic science in America are not contested. He gave new life to the study of economics. He interpreted the maxims of economic science in the language of to-day. In his hands economics became a real thing, no longer a disregarded adjunct of moral philosophy. These

services will long be gratefully remembered. It must be left to others to make a complete statement of them.

After his services have been narrated, those who knew Dr. Walker personally must still feel that much is yet unsaid. In their recollections, the charm of a delightful personality stands out as vividly as the clear judgment, the sound common sense, the terse and vigorous sentences which marked his conversation. Always open-hearted and approachable, his kindly manner left an ineffaceable impression upon younger men, who found at once stimulus and encouragement in their intercourse with him. It was this generous consideration for others which with his natural dignity made him an ideal presiding officer. It was this cultured affability which won for him innumerable friends who unite in praising the man as well as his works. His friends are to be found in all walks of life, for not only did the varied activities of President Walker bring him into relations with many men, but the lively human sympathies of his nature at once found a point of contact with all. For while a teacher and a man of science, he never became one whit less a man of the world, actively interested in humanity's daily concerns. Indeed his studies were intensely practical, an outcome of the living problems of the world about him.

With Dr. Walker the most prominent figure among American economic teachers has passed away. He has indeed built for himself the most fitting monument to his memory. For he has left behind him a noble series of works in which a vigorous and easy style, a clear intelligence and a strong humanity will continue to do him honor. Other memorials will be erected to his name which will not be forgotten. In these lines it has been our wish to express briefly our profound esteem for this distinguished scholar, and our sense of loss in his death, which will be keenly felt by our Academy.

R. P. F.

January, 1897.